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ORIGINAL NOVELLETTE.

For the Chronicle.

HELEN BERNE.

BY R. W. THOMAS.

Author of "The Young Colonel;" "The Refugees;" "Lilly Dale;" "The Convent Prisoner;" "Jane Marion;" "The Bride of an Hour;" "Ida Holmes," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XV.

THE ball-room was lighted up immediately after supper, and soon filled with the gay and fashionable. Helen, at the solicitation of her father, backed by Mrs. Whitman and Miss Lee appeared, for the first time, in a festive scene so at variance with her feelings. Not on his own account did Mr. Berne urge his daughter to mingle with the gay, but because he hoped it might be the means of restoring that cheerful tone to her feelings so much more consonant with her natural disposition than the gloomy despondence that hung like a pall over her once joyous spirit. But he knew not the depth of the wound he was attempting to heal by an application so simple; nor did he reflect that the glad sounds of mirth, so exhilirating to the joyous and light-hearted, often serve to deepen sadness into gloom, and gloom into despair.

Appearing, as she now did, under the protection of Mrs. Whitman, who was known to many of the visitors as a lady of high intelligence and unquestioned prudence, Helen began to be viewed in a very different light from that which had been thrown upon her character by the vile misrepresentations of Mrs. Meddler and Joseph Estelle. Many, therefore, of both sexes, and of the highest standing, were introduced to her at their own request, and thus made her far more conspicuous than was agreeable. But her gracefully modest deportment, unrivaled beauty and pleasant remarks won upon popular favor, until few believed that a thought of evil could harbor in the bosom of one who seemed the impersonation of purity as well as beauty. Mr. Berne, in his delight at seeing his daughter once more smiling brightly, laughed and jested with those about him, until he seemed, suddenly, to become aware that he was attracting a greater share of attention than was his due; and, by way of retreat, turned, to Mr. Motley and said:

"What is the matter with you, to-night, sir? Are you going to make me do all the talking? If so, you must do my share of the dancing."

"Talking of dancing, sir," said Motley, "reminds me that I have met with a serious disappointment this evening. The partner I had engaged for the dance, has failed to make her appearance, and I am apprehensive that I shall not be able to enjoy my favorite amusement, in her absence."

"I had supposed, Ned," said Mr. Eskridge, with the same mock gravity, "that a man of your taste would not grieve over the loss of such a partner as Mrs. Meddler, and that, too, in the midst of so much beauty."

"You may make light of her, George, if you choose; but I assure you she will weigh down some two or three of the ladies that grace this occasion; and as for beauty, you know there is no fixed standard except in China, where they estimate it, as we do pork, by the pound; and if that be the correct mode, she is by far the most beautiful woman at the Springs."

"There is yet another standard of beauty, Mr. Motley," said Mr. Lee; "you remember the old saying—handsome is, that handsome does! How will her beauty stand this test?"

"I fear sir, it would as rapidly depreciate, by this standard, as it would be enhanced by the other. But we are loosing time while discussing the merits—or rather demerits, of this 'hostis humani generis;' so if I can find a partner among these ladies, I will join in the dance. What do you say, Miss Lee? Has my first choice operated so much to my prejudice as to make you unwilling to appear with me on the floor?"

"Oh, no!" she answered, with a smile, as she took his arm, "I do not look upon it as an evidence of your taste, but as a mark of your respect for old age."

At the same time, Jane gave her hand, as a partner, to Mr. Eskridge, and by a revolution, common to such assemblages, Helen, Mrs. Whitman and Henry Lee were all that remained of the crowd that so recently filled that portion of the room.

"I am surprised, Henry," said Mrs. Whitman, "that you are not provided with a partner, for, if I am not mistaken, you are very fond of dancing."

"I was once, very fond of it, and still like to see it going on, aunt. It is an innocent amusement and very conducive to health; but I have no disposition to indulge this evening, unless, indeed, Helen will consent to be my partner—otherwise, I would rather be a looker on here in Vienna."

"Excuse me, if you please;" Helen replied; "for I am as little disposed as you are, to be an actor in such a scene, and greatly prefer the society of Mrs. Whitman as long as she will bear with my dulness."

"I shall be happy, my dear Helen," she answered, "if I can afford you any present interest, or by any effort of mine, add to your stock of permanent enjoyment. But it is rarely the case that the young seek the society of the old for that pleasure which they usually expect to find only among those of their own age."

"That is true;" said Mr. Lee; "and it is because they who have reached the meridian of life, but rarely possess that charity for the levity and indiscretions of youth which their own experience should have taught them; and, as a necessary consequence, there is no sympathy between them, but rather an antipathy that becomes a repulsive sternness which forbids any approach to familiarity on the part of the young. If all persons of your age, aunt, possessed your unbounded charity and goodness of heart, the unnatural barriers between the two periods of life would be broken down, and old age would be rendered more cheerful, and youth, more discreet. One Epicurus can do more to advance human happiness than a thousand Zenos."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Hart, who just then joined them, "are you delivering a lecture on ethics, Mr. Lee, and in a ball-room!"

"No, sir, the remark was incidental."

"And I hope it was made in jest," said Mr. Hart, "for I should be sorry to hear you speak seriously in commendation of such a man as Epicurus, and especially in the presence of ladies."

"I apprehend, sir," said Mr. Lee, "that you have imbibed the popular prejudice against the bestand wisest of heathen moralists. That his name has become a term of reproach, is no proof that his example was bad, or his precepts vicious in their tendency. His Garden was never polluted by licenciousness any more than the Portico of Zeno; and that the stoic philosophy, of the latter, obtained to a greater degree than the benign and humanising tenets of the latter, is no argument in favor of the superiority of either; and then, as now, want of success was prima facie evidence of want of merit. In the rivalry between the schools of Philosophy, the ascendancy of the one was the ruin of the other, and was so understood by the populace, whithout one sensible reflection upon the merits of either."

"I am not conversant enough with the subject to argue it with youth, Mr. Lee; but even granting that Epicurus was the great and good man you esteem him to have been, his opinions have been condemned by the world, and his practice made a synonyme with licenciousness. Is it right, then, that we should commend doctrines that are considered subversive of good morals, by the great mass of mankind, even if they are as pure as trtuth itself?"

"It is my turn, now, Mr. Hart, to hope that you have spoken in jest, for, surely, sir, you can not seriously ask if it be right to advance truth. But if you intend, as I suspect, to ask whether it be politic to do so, a good deal may be said on both sides; though I incline to a strict construction of the old adage, that honesty is the best policy. Error is never benificial, and truth, never hurtful, and it is the want of the latter, and the abundance of the former that create the ills which curse society. And pardon me, sir, if I add that I can never be politician enough to contract or expand my honest opinions to fill the measure of popular belief."

"But you can not hope, Mr. Lee, to remove this curse from society, by reviving the doctrines of Epicurus? Do you not agree with me, Miss Berne, that the remedy would be worse than the evil itself?"

"I am no metaphysician;" she replied; "but with my limited information on the subject, I would say that the philosophy which makes happiness the primary object of life, and which teaches us to obtain it through the proper direction of our faculties—an enlargement of our perceptions, and a refinement of our tastes, is preferable to that which assumes that perfect happiness consists in perfect indifference."

"You are the first lady," said Mr. Hart, "that I ever heard speak in commedation of Epicurus."

"He is a favorite character of my father," she replied, "and perhaps I am too much prejudiced in his favor, you, too much against him. At all events, the subject is too deep for me, and I must leave it in more competent hands."

"It is too deep for me, too;" said Mr. Hart, "and if Mr. Lee will excuse me for having introduced it, I will drop it."

"That is a wise dispositon of it;" Mrs. Whitman remarked; "for it is one of those subjects that can not be profitably discussed in a ball-room, and few can do it justice even in their closets."

"I did not come here, Miss Berne," said Mr. Hart, "to discuss the relative merits of Zeno and Epicurus, but to ask if I may have the pleasure of dancing with you."

"Excuse me, if you please, Mr. Hart, I do not feel able to undergo the fatigue, and am here as a spectator only."

"I believe I shall be forced to play the spectator, too;" he said; "for I have failed in every effort to get a partner."

"If you are anxious to dance," said Mr. Lee, "I can procure you a very interesting partner." Mr. Hart having assented, he led him across the room and introduced him to a lady who consented to dance, and Mr. Lee returned to his seat.

"Tell me Henry," said Mrs. Whitman, addressing her nephew, "who it is that Mr. Motley is showing off in such a ludicrous manner? He seems to have taken the poor fellow under his especial care, and is trying how many blunders he can make him commit for the amusement of his set."

"He is a stranger to me," Mr. Lee answered, "and he seems to be equally so to the business in which he is engaged.—Your friend, Mr. Motley," he continued, addressing himself to Helen, "is a great wag.—See how he is tormenting that poor creature. But it is no matter for him, because he is old enouch to know that he can't play the boy at his time of life, and, like a simpleton, he dances whenever and wherever Mr. Motley directs him."

The scene was indeed ludicrous, and even Helen was compelled to join in the laugh that rang through the room. The subject of so much mirth, was a man apparently fifty years of age, and was of diminutive statue. His face seemed to have been intended only as a base for his nose which left little room for any other feature. His forehead was so low and narrow that it seemed to be merely a continuation of the nose, under which there was a mouth of immoderate dimensions—the lower lip of which served as an indifferent substitute for a chin, and nearly in the right place, were two small gray eyes.

To render his appearance still more comic, he was dressed in the top of the fashion. His pantaloons were almost as tight as the skin from the waist to the knee, and thence, downward, as loose as bags, giving to his legs the shape of a trumpet flower—the thigh representing the stem.

His dancing was full as ridiculous as his figure. Believing that agility was the perfection of grace, he bounded as high as he could, throwing his legs loosely about, and all the time looking as grave and self-important as if he considered himself the admired of all admirers. Ignorant of the evolutions, he trusted to Mr. Motley to guide him through the intricacies of the figure, and implicitly obeyed every direction, thereby producing such a state of confusion that, by common consent, all stood still, whilst Mr. Motley sent him "hither and yon," until, amidst roars of laughter, he stopped, from sheer exaustion, in the centre of the circle. The perspiration trickled from his nose, and he painted like an overdriven horse.

"I can go no longer, sir;" said the little man, almost gasping for breath; "and don't think I shall dance again to-night, unless you will change the figure and take it turn about, for no one man can dance for a whole set."

"That is true," said Mr. Motley, "and as you seem a little fatigued, we will resume our seats, and when we meet again upon the floor, will divide the labor with you."

"Who is the little man, Mr. Motley," asked Mr. Lee, "to whom you have been giving lessons in dancing?"

"He bears the significant name of Timothy Dolt; but for further information concerning him, I must refer you to Miss Jane Estelle."

"To me, Mr. Motley!" Jane exclaimed. "Why do you refer him to me for information concerning that droll looking creature?"

"I will tell you, Jane, if you insist; but I am inclined to believe you do not desire it, in this presence, and especially if all be true that he told me this afternoon.—But don't be alarmed," he continued, seeing her confusion, "for I will say nothing about it."

"Is that the man, your uncle has chosen to be your lord and master?" Asked Helen.

"The same!" Jane answered; and again they indulged in a hearty laugh.

"What a fine subject for a flirtation," said Anna Lee. "Why Jane, you can lead him by the nose—if you can grasp it—as long as you please."

"I have no disposition to try it." Was Jane's reply. "And if I were so inclined, there is no distinction to be won by a flirtation with such a fool.—But, did you say, Mr. Motley, that you had a conversation with him, this evening, relative to his business here?"

"Yes; he introduced himself to me, without any ceremony, and gave me a portion of his history—what portion, I leave you to infer—and wound up by telling me his business here at this time."

"Then," said Jane, "since you know all about it, you will not be surprised when I ask you to befriend me so far as to contrive the ways and means to send him home again."

"I will certainly use my best endeavors to do so, Jane, if you insist; but I have already found him useful, and can make him much more so, in yours and Helen's service. and would dislike to give him up. He, as the tool of Mrs Meddler and Joe Estelle, is, to a certain extent, in their confidence, and all that he knows, or may learn, I can squeeze out of him. In the meantime, I promise that he shall not molest you."

"Perhaps," said Helen to Jane, "you had better engage the services of Mrs. Meddler, for she is an adept in the art of scheming, and has no scruples about the means."

"I fear not her scheming, for myself;" said Jane, "but her malice is to be dreaded, and its effects have already been felt by more than one person here."

"If you allude to me, Miss Estelle, as one of those persons," said Mr. Lee, "I acknowledge that I have felt it deeply, and the more so because it has led me to be unjust to another, to a degree that renders atonement almost impossible."

"The acknowledgement is itself an atonement;" said Jane, "and deeply as I am interested for the party agrieved, I accept it is ample satisfaction for your temporary misconstruction."

"Accept also my warmest thanks for your generosity," he replied, "and permit me to tax it yet further by begging you to obtain for me Helen's forgiveness, of which I have not yet been assured."

"There is no occasion for any intercession, Mr. Lee;" said Helen, in as firm a tone as she could command, "the transgression has been mutual—so let our forgiveness be."

Taking Ann Lee's arm, she then left the room, and Mr. Lee would have followed, had not Mrs. Whitman reminded him that Helen wished to be alone with Ann.

CHAPTER XVI.

"Why do you wish to leave the room, Helen?" asked Ann Lee as they passed out through the door.

"I am foolishly nervous sometimes," was the answer," and when that is the case, I like to be alone. Had I stid much longer, my feelings would have become too strong for my powers of resistance, and would have exposed me to the ridicule of those who only need a pretext for making me appear contemptible in the eyes of the company."

"But now, my dear Helen, that the misunderstanding between you and my brother," said Ann as they went to her room, "is satisfactorily explained, you should not regard the opinions of others and suffer yourself to be disturbed by that nervousness of which you just now complained."

"It is easy for those my dear Ann whose nerves are steady and whose hearts are light, to imagine that others are culpable in giving way to an excess of feeling which is, in part, attributable to the morbid sensitiveness of a disordered nervous system. In the memory of the past there is much to disturb my peace of mind and my anticipations of the future bring no relief—my presentiments are all of evil."

"You are a strange creature, Helen.—"The circumstances that would add infinitely to the happiness of other ladies, seem to render you miserable. You are devotedly loved by the man you love, the trifling misunderstanding that existed a few hours ago, is fully explained, and yet you are still unhappy. Is there anything I can do or say that will make you more at ease?

"I have already derived much comfort Ann, from the affectionate sympathy of yourself and your kind aunt; and in after life I shall look back upon our transient intercouse with mingled pleasure and regret."

"Our transient intercourse!" Ann exclaimed. "Why what is to prevent it being permanent? Surely you do not intend to disard my brother—to destroy his happiness—perhaps your own, by yielding to a momentary impulse of resentment?"

"No, Ann, such is not my present purpose, but there will be renewed efforts to destroy his confidence in me, and strange as it may seem to you, those efforts will be successful, and the reconciliation which has just taken place will be as short-lived as the misunderstanding that preceded it. I know your brother's high sense of honor—his contempt for every thing mean.—I know too, that the standard of female perfection which he has erected, is far too high to be reached by any of my sex, and that she who is tried by it and falls short, must sink even lower than the scale of her true merit. This ideal standard—the creation of his own fancy, stimulated by books, and untested by practical observation, is to him as correct a measure of woman's character as if the experience of ages had settled it. And though he may seem for a time, to have confidence in me, yet, when malice shall again assail me with specious arguments of blended truth and falsehood, he will repent his hasty decision in my favor, and a final separation will be the consequence."

"No, no, Helen! You do him injustice—indeed you do. He is neither fickle nor suspicious, and strong indeed must be the proof that can make him doubt you again."

"I know that you are anxious, Ann, to bring about a union between your brother and myself, and am truly grateful for the partiality that prompts the wish; but indulge no such idle hope—your wish will never be gratified. So fully am I satisfied that my prediction will be verified, that, even now, I am striving to withdraw my heart from his keeping."

"You are mistaken in your conjectures, Helen, and let me entreat you not to act so as to force your prediction to come to pass. Let matters work their own way, and do not endeavor to harden your heart against my brother who loves you with such entire devotion. Mutual distrust will sometimes end in mutual dislike, when mutual confidence would have engendered mutual love."

"I shall endeavor to do your brother justice in the fullest sense of the term;" Helen replied; "but remember, dear Ann, that I owe as much to myself as to him. And as truly as I love and honor him, do you think I have so little self-respect as to suffer myself to be the passive victim of his caprice? One moment, his equal, the next, an object of contempt? No, never! I must be all to him, or I will be nothing; and until I am satisfied that he looks upon me as worthy of his entire confidence, I will never consent to look upon him as other than an acquaintance."

"Have you not already received ample proof that he does possess this confidence? Has he not, this evening, asked and received your forgiveness for his misconstruction of you?"

"Yes, Ann, that is all true; but I require him to show his sincerity not in words only, but in deeds."

"How in deeds?" Asked Ann, with evident surprise.

"I will tell you, Ann, and feel sure that you will agree with me. In the first place, when he made an offer of his hand, soon after our arrival here, I addressed a letter to him, explaining as fully as I could, all the circumstances of my past history connected with the charges he had heard prefered against me, and I surely had a right to expect that he would take some notice of that communication. But he not only did not reply to it, but has never even alluded to it. In the next place, when he received the anonymous letter, of which you told me, he should have brought it to me, and asked an explanation of its contents. Instead of this, he took them for granted and acted accordingly. This is what I mean by showing his sincerity in deeds."

"As it regards the first point, Helen, I did not know that you had ever written to him, for he never mentioned it, but, on the contrary, told me that he had never seen your hand-writing, which proves conclusively, that your letter never reached him. And as to the next point, he could not bring, or send the letter to you, because it was offered for his perusal on condition that he would return it forthwith; and having, very properly, declined to read it on those conditions, it never came into his possession. So, after all, I hope you will admit that he is not so culpable as you had supposed."

"It is not of that letter, Ann, that I am speaking, though I think it was his duty to have spoken of it to me. The one I alluded to, was addressed to him without signature or post-mark; and if you know nothing of it, you must admit that he has not been quite as communicative to you as you had supposed."

"I don't remember," said Ann, with some hesitation, "whether he told me of that letter or not; but, depend upon it, there is some mistake about it—some mystery which I will make it my business to unravel. So smooth your brow, and let us return to our friends who are, no doubt, impatient at our absence."

"I am ready to attend you," Helen answered, "though the privacy of my own chamber is more to my taste than a crowded ball-room."

On their return, they were not a little surprised to find Mrs. Meddler seated, at her ease, in the immediate vicinity of their friends. Both passed her without the slightest sign of recognition; but she was not to be repulsed by means so mild. Her object was if possible, to find an opportunity to converse with Mr. Lee, hoping it was not yet too late to make an impression that would result in a final breach between him and Helen. How far she might have succeeded, can never be known, for the opportunity did not occur—he being as solicitous to avoid her as she was to approach him, and instead of taking any notice of her, he had been listening, with deep interest, to a conversation between Jane Estelle and his aunt, relative to Helen's antecedents. And so much was he delighted with Jane's remarks upon the subject, and the conclusions she drew from the facts connected therewith, that he really regretted the return of the ladies, which put a stop to the dialogue.

Mr. Eskridge, too, with his usual candor and good sense, explained to Mrs. Whitman the nature of the reports in circulation about Helen, and showed how little truth had served as a basis for the exaggerated accounts she heard, and concluded by expressing a hope that no one would give credence to anything that tended to criminate her beyond the statements which had been made by Jane and himself.

It occured to Helen, on entering the room, and seeing Mrs. Meddler, that the opportunity was a good one for the threefold purpose of exculpating herself from the charge of having written the letter in the possession of Joe Estelle—of making it appear that Mrs. Meddler forged it, and of giving Mr. Lee a gentle rebuke for the course he had pursued in relation to it. Accordingly she said:

"Mr. Eskridge, I will be greatly obliged to you if you will return the letter I wrote you this morning. It can be of no further use to you, and may subject me to painful embarrassment."

"The letter you wrote me this morning!" He exclaimed, with unfeigned surprise. "I do not understand you, Helen—I received no letter from you this morning."

"If you did not," she asked, "how could you have dropped it from your pocket?"

"I have dropped no letter from my pocket, to-day." He answered with increased surprise.

"If you did not drop it," she continued in the same style of interrogation, "how could it have been picked up by Mr. Estelle and exhibited to another?"

"I cannot answer your questions, Helen, unless you will explain yourself more fully, for I am totally in the dark on the subject."

"So was I, Mr. Eskridge, until a friend enlightened me, and thus enabled me to disprove one of the many charges prefered against me, and which would otherwise have passed uncontradicted. Having accomplished my object, I refer you to the author of the letter for further information."

"But your reference will avail me nothing unless you tell me who the author is, for I can as readily guess the solution of the mystery as I can the writer's name."

"There is but one woman here, Mr. Eskridge, who is base enough to forge a letter, and I shall leave you to find out who she is. Having accomplished my purpose, I have nothing more to say."

During this short dialogue, Mrs. Meddler looked—and no doubt felt—like a criminal awaiting the sentence of the court. The eyes of the little group were fixed upon her, and not one of them doubted that she was the author of the letter in question. Nor were the feelings of Mr. Lee of the most pleasant character, though we must do him the justice to say that he intended to relate to Helen the substance of his interview with Mr. Estelle, but during the day no opportunity had offered. He was not only surprised at the subject of the foregoing conversation, but at the manner in which it was carried on by Helen, whose flashing eye and flushed cheek betokened a spirit for which he had not given her credit; and at the same time that he was pleased at its manifestation, he could not but perceive that she was not to be trifled with when she felt herself agrieved. This conviction not only served to increase his respect for her character, but to admonish him of the danger of forfeiting her esteem by the vacillating course he was pursuing.

The silence which followed the dialogue, was broken by the advent of Mr. Motley, who had just seated his partner and hastened to join our little group.

"What makes you all look so grave?" He asked. "You remind me of a congregation of quakers waiting for the spirit to move them. Has there been an evil genius among you?"

"You have guessed it, Ned;" said Mr. Eskridge; "the evil spirit is abroad, and we look to you to exorcise it."

"I don't know that I have that power, but will try it.—Ah, Mrs. Meddler!" He exclaimed—seeming to have been ignorant of her presence till then. "I am happy to see you here, and was sure you wouldn't disappoint me, though you did seem to decline my invitation to dance to-night."

"Now, Mr. Motley, you are beginning with your fun again. You know I am not going to dance, so it is not worth while to be pestering me about it."

"But I don't know it, madam, for you said, this afternoon, that you would not be here, and if you changed your mind on that point, you may reconsider this, and I consent to dance, for I am sure it is as great a sin to look on as to participate."

"I am not even looking on, Mr. Motley, and didn't come here for that purpose; if I had, it would be sinful."

"That is too nice a point for me to settle, madam, but I will lay the case before Elder Diggs, and get his opinion on it, for they say he is very knowing in such matters; and if all be true that old Tom Hewitt says—"

"But all is not true that he says, Mr Motley, and I will thank you never to mention his name to me again."

"I can't help it, Mrs. Meddler, the old man is so amusing, and tells so much that is true under the garb of jest, that I can't help repeating his sayings—or at least trying to do so."

"Repeat what you please, Mr. Motley. It is very becoming in you to be making sport of an unprotected female."

"It is better to make sport than to make mischief, madam. But I was not aware that you are an unprotected female. It is true, you are a widow; but I thought you were under the protection of Joe Estelle, who has long been your friend and counsellor."

"That he has been my friend for many years, sir," she answered, in an angry tone, "I do not deny, but the insinuation you have thrown out is false, and I will let Mr. Estelle know that you are making a too free use of his name, sir."

"You will oblige me by doing so, madam, for nothing would give me more pleasure than an opportunity to tell him that he is a black-hearted villain. As for the insinuation which you seem to have discovered in my remark, I can settle that to the satisfaction of both of you, by reminding him of a conversation, in Staunton, on a certain occasion, when, in my presence, old Tom Hewitt told him—"

"You shall answer for this, Mr. Motley, as sure as I have a friend on earth. And these ladies, too, that are giggling at your impertinence, shall rue the day that they treated me with disrespect." She arose from her seat, and with a malignant glance at the party, was about to retreat, when Mr. Motley laid his hand upon her arm, and thus addressed her:

"I have endeavored, madam, by a manifestation of contempt, to show you that your presence in this company, is an unwelcome intrusion, and hoped you would take the hint. But since you have not done so, permit me to say to you, that all us, your schemes—concocted with the aid of Joe Estelle—are well known to and can, consequently, do no harm. I would advise you, therefore, to go home and stay there—to forge no more letters, practise the Christian principles you profess—in short, be a lady if you can. Tell Joe Estelle I have given you some good advice, and have some of the same sort left for him, if he will not hide from me as he has been doing for some days."

During the delivery of this advice, he kept his eye upon Mrs. Meddler's who quailed under the steady look, and when he had done, she hastened away without one word of reply, or one defiant glance.

At the suggestion of Mr. Berne, who said he had some arrangements to make preparatory to his departure for Winchester, in the morning, the ladies retired from the ball-room.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

GRAPHIC PICTURE.—We need hardly state that the following strongly drawn picture of modern Democracy, is from the gifted pen of Prentice, of the Louisville Journal:

"Advocating no fixed public policy, nor any settled political principles, trimming its sails to catch the popular breeze in every locality, intensely sectional in every section, and as changeable in hue as a chameleon.—Democracy has more than outlived any usefulness it ever might have seemed to possess. It is the curse with which the South has been crowned, and with whose foul filaments she is encircled. It has become a cancer upon the public morals, political leprosy spreading its festering corruption and deadly disease through the whole body politic.—It does not deserve to be dignified by the name of a party, for it is a mere faction, whose irrevocable nature it is to be base until it can be mischievous, to lick the dust until it can sting, to creep on its belly until it can twist its folds around its victim. For years the South has been its victim, and now its deadly coils are enwrapping the Union of these States. It has attained a surreptitious power, not by any intrinsic merit or vitality, but solely by artful contrivances to distract and divide those who are opposed to it. Its course must soon be run, or that of the Union will be ended. Let Southern men look behind this false glare of friendship assumed and the specious words that gloss the promise that "palter with us in a double sense," and they will see for themselves that the real traitors to the South, and the deadliest enemies to the Union are the leaders of the Lecompton Democracy.

THE LAST OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY.—A party of enraged women in a town out West, entered a groggery, a few days ago, and demolished some forty odd barrels of Whiskey.—*Savannah Republican.*